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AUTHOR Jensen, Jan
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ABSTRACT

The benefits for students, teachers, administrators, and library media specialists of telefacsimile use in high school library media centers are outlined. It is noted that students, including those with special needs, would benefit from the expanded information searches made possible by telefacsimile-facilitated interlibrary cooperation. The benefits noted for teachers and administrators include more efficient procedures for grant proposal submission and conference registration; enhanced access to district resources; and expanded links with publishers, vendors, foundations, and professional associations. Benefits noted for library media specialists include improvement of their responses to reference questions and serials requests, greater resource sharing options, and facilitation of cooperative planning for collection development. (2 references) (GL)

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THE BENEFITS OF TELEFACSIMILE FOR
HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA CENTERS

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TELEFACSIMILE IN SCHOOLS

Why Fax?

A Position Paper Presented

to

Technology in Education Conference

Aspen, Colorado

June, 1989

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Why fax? Real benefits for students and educators stand out. Telefacsimile brings library users of all types rapid information access. Within twenty four hours, students, teachers, administrators and library media specialists have information in their hands heretofore beyond their reach. That adds up to direct payoffs for each patron. Sometimes for very different reasons fax serves unique client needs. More often than not, it satisfies overlapping needs. Consider student benefits first.

What high school student hasn't tramped to the neighborhood public library or local college library to track down some illusive reference? Typical ninth and tenth graders, still on foot (or skateboard) lack the mobility of their upperclassmen friends. With the installation of fax services in school libraries, all students have access to other libraries, to those in the immediate school community and to even more throughout the metropolitan area. Teenagers, who used to give up on some research topics, no longer forego their interests because of resource shortages. They can, and do, choose a wider variety of subjects for investigation. Through the current statewide expansion of ASAP activity, students can enter school, public and academic libraries all along the front range. The first line of service, however, remains with the school library whose mission is to help students crystallize their thinking and strategize their information searches.

Learning how to maximize indexes like Reader's Guide, then approach and tap Magazine Index, UPI and countless other DIALOG databases, students seek out wider varieties of publications both popular and scholarly with varying points of view. They grow to expect interlibrary cooperation and answers to their reference requests. Fax assures them that they can have the documents they want and need. This information technology fills a current and future niche in students' lives. After all, if one can make cash withdrawals or order a roast beef and cheddar sandwich by merely touching a screen, the workplace that students will occupy may place similar communication tools, like telefacsimile, at their fingertips. What job holding, 16-year-old with car payments and expenses for college or technical training has the time to retrieve information outside of school? Given the competition s/he will encounter, how can this student settle for less at his/her school library?

The debater, football player, slower learner, gifted student, and handicapped-- each has special needs which can be satisfied via fax. Diverse and vital, these needs deserve more than the traditional interlibrary loan response. Delays of two weeks and longer cannot whet the assignment demands of most high school students. Even if lead times were long enough, the thinking educators want students to develop and engage takes time too.

How do teachers and administrators profit from fax services? Meeting their own deadlines is a major concern. Quick access to

school district resources is often critical. Connecting with the purchasing department, Professional Library Media Center, curriculum coordinators or superintendent's office may demand urgent attention. Fax provides links with publishers, vendors of all types, foundations and professional associations. When hasn't an educator discovered at the last minute a worthy conference or workshop to attend? Fax not only expedites late registrations but also allows grant writers precious time for polishing their proposals. Bridges to business partnerships, student mentorships, and community resources are just some of educational dimensions that fax possesses. Yearbook sponsors and counselors' scholarship recommendations have another recourse besides express mail for those all too critical timelines. Teachers accustomed to instantaneous outlets for their information needs realize the expanded options for their students. Instructional and management implications multiply exponentially.

Library media specialists can take larger strides towards program improvement with fax. Increasing customer satisfaction from students, teachers, and administrators becomes immediately apparent. Both those within each school and among all patrons of consortium libraries enjoy a better response to reference questions and serials requests. Public relations and collection credibility are enhanced by every satisfied customer. The word travels fast-- "you can get so much more at your local library." What librarian doesn't seek cost effective measures for

delivering the best information to the most clients in the fastest possible fashion?

Fax enables libraries to enhance their collaboration, rethink interlibrary document delivery, and entertain greater resource sharing options. Before acquiring fax, one District high school library could provide its clients 225 different periodical titles; with fax, each library pooled its resources and helped compile a directory of 845 titles available from six pilot sites. Cooperative planning between multitype libraries can coordinate services to their mutual patrons--high school students and educators-- in strategic ways. Educators transmit lesson plans to public librarians so that they might anticipate the specific needs of students in their assignments. Working together to serve their mutual clientele, multitype libraries can unify their service response.

Closing the gap between professionals in separate institutions builds rapport within the library community. Meeting and sharing ideas escalates communication and nurtures collegiality. ASAP high school libraries are imitating branch library models and developing unique collections in each location. Collection development rather than duplication has become a cooperative

focus. Diversifying, then specializing in specific subject areas, each pilot library acts not unlike a magnet school that dedicates resource support on defined fields of knowledge for other sites. For example the following chart reflects decisions made by pilot libraries. These decisions guided serials order for both paper and microform formats at each location.

NORTH AREA HIGH SCHOOL LMCS

Subject Area Specialities
for Reference and Serials

ARVADA SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL:

Local and Regional
Information
Science and Medicine
Geography
Foreign Language

ARVADA WEST HIGH SCHOOL:

Fine Arts
Home Economics
Language Arts

POMONA HIGH SCHOOL

History
Social Sciences
Biography
Religion and Mythology
Counseling

STANDLEY LAKE HIGH SCHOOL

Business
Math
Music
Physical Education
Technology

As a special library, the Professional Library Media Center, which serves school district teachers and administrators and acts as an interlibrary loan agency, specializes in information on educational topics and professional development. The Arvada branch to the Jefferson County Public Library has unique collections on...

Reallocation of limited budget resources is possible through this type of cooperation. High schools can avoid unnecessary duplication of serial titles and can broaden their selections and lengthen title runs. One library might be responsible for science publications and therefore subscribe to paper and microform formats to support consortium library users as well as their own. For example Arvada Senior High School is a consortium depository for the following publications and insures their availability.

ARVADA SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Depository Titles

Archaeology Magazine
Arvada Sentinel
Astronomy
Audubon
Aviation Week and Space Technology
Bioscience
Bulletin of Atomic Scientists
Clearing House
Colorado Heritage
Colorado Magazine
Colorado Outdoors
Congressional Digest
Conservationist
Denver Magazine
Denver Post
Discover
Environment
Life
National Geographic
National Geographic World
National Parks
National Wildlife
Natural History
Newsweek
Oceans
Omni
People
Popular Science
Prevention
Psychology Today
Science
Science Digest
Science News
Scientific American
Sea Frontiers and Sea Secrets
Sports Illustrated
Time
U.S. News and World Report
World Press Review

By planning together, librarians can increase both the scope and backlog of different serials available through the same level of

funding. Wise buying and getting more out of investments is everyone's business in libraries. Better utilization of human resources can be realized as well. Preparing a standard document for fax transmission has not been a problem. Clerical impact have been minimal. Librarians report that present request traffic demands little attention or time. More elusive sources on microform require paper copies as well as those serials which begin in paper format. On rare occasions a student assistant may have difficulty locating a misshelved publication or getting a turn at the photocopier. Those steps may consume as much as fifteen minutes. Time well spent in terms of time saved for the library user, not to mention the savings to shrinking library budgets...

Every aspect and issue inherent in resource sharing takes on new meaning with telefacsimile technology. From structured agreements to request protocols, librarians can shape their own network and standards. Cultivating rapport, building trust, developing mutual benefits, achieving consensus,-- all are essential to launching and residuals of this concerted activity.

Teaching continues to be a primary role for library media specialists. Leading students and teachers to information beyond the schoolhouse door, brokering services and sources from libraries around the district, community and throughout the state requires professional commitment. Meeting that commitment, school library media specialists fill a unique gap in education

for their clients and peers with fax capabilities.

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- Buchman, James H. "The Authoritative Guide on the Use of Telefacsimile in Libraries; An Occasional Paper." Edited by Linda L. Alter. The State Library of Ohio, Series 2, No. 3, November, 1988.

Contrary to the stereotypical image of the technorevolution, "marked increase in telefacsimile usage" does not dehumanize library service. If anything, it has enhanced present services to customers conditioned to "accept a delay of days or possibly weeks to receive a filled interlibrary loan. However since 1981 fax technology has affected a change to this scenario." Most fax applications in libraries provide a direct patron service benefit.

- Edgar, Jim. "An Evaluation of the Facsimile Transportation Project Among Multitype Libraries West Central Illinois (1983, 1984, 1985)" Illinois State Library, March, 1986.

A Project funds by a LSCA grant was evaluated by Margaret A. Wainer. The study focused upon the feasibility of fax for interlibrary loan. Fax technology was founded to be reliable by providing point to point service. Eighteen institutions reported through survey data that 57.1% of the requests were for college/university research, 22.8% for medical reference, and 9.5% for personal use. High levels of satisfaction were reported by both library staffs and patron transmission speeds and costs ranged from 25-70 seconds and from \$.485 to 1.89 per 5 page document.